Deaf children on the autistic spectrum
BATOD National Conference 2013

Focus on technology
Special interest in deafness and autistic spectrum conditions

Workshop

Following on from the planned special interest day (Feb 13) on deaf children and autistic conditions, this workshop will explore recent developments and extend the opportunity to discuss experiences and share useful resources. We plan to examine the potential of technology to support individuals in communication and learning by looking at iPad apps and using case studies.
Programme and outcomes from 13 Feb

- Focused on assessment, behaviour management, placement and communication.
- Delegates shared experiences of pupils, strategies were suggested by experienced practitioners.
- All delegates happy to be on an email link group.
- All would like another training day.
- No one had experience of an online forum so were not really interested in pursuing this.
- Need to collect data on numbers diagnosed and suspected.
Today's group

- How many have pupils with a diagnosis of deafness and autism?
- At what age was diagnosis made?
- By whom?
- How many pupils are suspected of having autistic traits?
- What is their place of education?
Technology
So how are these youngsters with hearing instruments?

- e.g. Baha, hearing aids, cochlear implants-share experiences
- Sensory issues-when to stop/encourage use
- Results from research: US 4 case studies....
- Outcomes differ: communication shows the most improved aspect rather than the behavioural and sensory issues
- Guys and St Thomas 8 children on the programme- details of 2 for circulation.
  - 1 is 1 year post implant and future is looking good already
  - Outcome 6 on CAP: understands some common phrases through speech; SIR expresses a few word approximations
  - Two used PECS and moved on to sign
- Generally agreed that ci has little impact on wider ASD needs
- Seen fluctuations in use of the devices over time as well as CAP and Mais scores going up and down, more so than with other ci caseload
- youngsters need careful preparation changing from one hearing instrument to another

- fluctuations in use and achievement often at time of transitions

NB

Families should be made aware of the range of outcomes;

Be offered additional support at these times
Deafness and Autism published research

Little research mostly from USA
Some key studies see later refs
Odyssey 2008 from Gallaudet univ
Magazine edition dedicated to deafness and autism downloadable

Diagnosis of ASD is later in deaf children
So need to implement strategies ASAP
Autism

NAS definition: Spectrum condition ‘autisms’ and each an individual

Difficulties of varying degrees seen in all 3 areas:

1. Social interaction
2. Communication and language development
3. Imagination (lack of flexibility of thought, rigid, repetitive)

Sensory sensitivities are also common
Managing the behaviour is needed before communication and learning can take place.
Strategies and resources for behaviour management

- Any resources from the group?
- Technology is often a motivator for these pupils, use as a reward
- Obsessions/interests can also be used as rewards
Strategies for all!

- Know the child
- Observe—find the triggers
- Have a procedure
- Be consistent
- Consider staff too (and share with families)
- Rewards and contracts where appropriate
Reluctant communicators, joint attention is primary deficit

Sound might not work

Need to engage them using interests as motivators

Long acknowledged that Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is a useful approach particularly as a means of getting child to initiate interaction

Revolutionised by technology - using e communicators

iPad can be used as an e communicator

PECS approach is foundation of many communication apps on iPad
Range of devices available

Communicators

- Need to know purpose and context for use
- Ability/level of child

Evaluations:
www.autismeurope.org/publications/reports-and-good-practices/
iPad

- Device for key JOINT ATTENTION used well
- Cool tool
- Camera
- Video camera
- Fast link to Internet
- Customised accessibility
- Potential is amazing...limited only by user
Practicalities

- Covers for protection—myriad
- Frame, stand Big Grip frame £ 25-35
- Griffin (£29) military tested
- Insurance
- Dry and clean
- Home button cover £8.99
- Safety and restrictions—set options
Case studies and Youtube

See devices in use
Hear opinions of families
Trial lite versions of apps

Using the PECS principle there are a range of apps requiring different cognitive and literacy abilities

- Tap talk
- i communicate
- Proloquo2go

Many can use real photos and record voices
The better ones can be expensive
Some of my favourites

- Peekaboo earliest level
- Scene and heard
- Social stories (own creations best)
- Book creator
- Little maker
- Bubbles
- Cookie Doodle
- Paint animals
- Toy story
- Popplet (mind mapping)
- Science 360
- Save pencil
- All lite.

- Counting 123
- Curious Zoo
- Farmyard friends
- Kids I help (analogy)
- Lego
- Sparkle
- Numbers
- Nursery TV 1
- Glow draw
- ICAD free
- Jungle speak
- 3D brain
- More burger
Sound and music apps

- Soundrop
- Noise room
- Simon
- Sounds (phonetics for teachers)
- Smack talk
- Articulation
- Auditory verbal (ling sounds)
- Pocket phonic
- Piano
- Megaphone
- Finger drums
- Babies
Communication apps

- iComm
- Tap to talk
- Proloquo2Go
- BSL sign solutions
- Mobile sign
- FaceTime
Helpful centres

- RNID Library London www.ucl.ac.uk/library-rnid/will copy articles and post for small fee

- National Autistic Society London EC1V 1NG visit by appt - many journals and DVDs www.autism.org.uk

- Autism Education Trust www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk
Useful references

- Flo longhorn website for complex needs. Book available: www.flolonghorn.com
- Apps for Autism Louis Jean Brady 2011 Future Horizons
- Inclusive technology; Senmac
- Will Wade blog
- Therapy box www.therapy-box.co.uk
- www.ipadineducation.co.uk/iPad_in_Education/Welcome.html
References contd

- Electronic communicators for autism: which one to choose? www.autism europe.org/publications/reports-and-good-practices
- Great leap forward Boyd L. and Short R. Communication 2011 Autumn pp24-26
- Everybody 'appy www.netbuddy.org.uk/info-packs/apps-iPad
Studies in deafness and autism


Further interest

- BATOD SIG (special interest group) recently established to support professionals working with deaf children on the autistic spectrum
- Email Joyce Sewell-Rutter
- burwood@ewing-foundation.org.uk